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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: MANY QATARIS DON'T SUPPORT EDUCATION CITY; "SYMBOL
OF ELITES" - GEORGETOWN DEAN

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOSEPH E. LEBARON, FOR REASON 1.4 (D).

(C) KEY POINTS:

-- The Dean of Georgetown University in Qatar contends that most Qataris do not support Education City in Doha and see it rather as a symbol of elites.

-- Regional rivalries prevent neighboring countries from sending large numbers of students to Education City.

-- The influence of Wahhabism on education in Qatar is minimal and kept in check by the ruling family; no one has infringed on Education City's academic freedom.

-- COMMENT: While we know of no poll to confirm or refute the Dean's contention about Education City's lack of popular support, contacts have told us that it seems to them that Education City is disconnected from the rest of Qatari society. For Education City to be sustainable, the Qatari leadership -- and the six American universities in Doha -- will need to demonstrate to the Qatari people and citizens of the broader region that Education City presents a viable alternative to extremism.

11. (C) On August 11, Ambassador paid an introductory call on James Reardon-Anderson, Dean of Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q), one of the six American universities at Education City. Characterizing Qatar as a "family-owned business," the Dean described Education City as a singular vision of the Amir and his wife Sheikha Mozah that enjoys little popular support. Many Qataris, he asserted, view it as a "give-away" to foreigners.

12. (SBU) Feeding this view is the fact that Georgetown, like other universities at Education City, has retained its competitive admission requirements as a condition for awarding a degree identical to the one it confers on students in the United States. As a result, it is extremely difficult to recruit enough Qataris to make them the majority at GU-Q. Reardon-Anderson cited the current freshman class of 40 students, of which only 12 are Qataris.

13. (SBU) Similarly, Georgetown has not been successful in recruiting large numbers of non-Qatari Arabs to GU-Q, according to the Dean. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, out of a sense of pride and competitiveness, generally do not offer scholarships to their citizens to study at Education City, even though they do receive scholarship funding to study at the schools' main campuses in the United States.

14. (C) Asked about the role of Wahhabism on Qatari society and regional rivalries, Georgetown academic Mehran Kamrava said that the impact of Wahhabi doctrine in Qatar was minimal. Most clerics are foreign, he said, and therefore self-censor in order to avoid being deported. Additionally, Qatar does not have a well-known center for religious learning such as al-Azhar in Egypt or Qom in Iran. Qatar

University's College of Sharia trains mostly women who become teachers, not religious leaders. Religious education is part of the school curriculum, Kamrava said, over which the ruling family keeps a watchful eye.

15. (C) Reardon-Anderson added that Qatari students that he has observed at GU-Q are "orthodox in their views, but lacking some basic knowledge about Islam." All students are required to take the "Question of God" course at GU-Q, just as at Georgetown's Washington campus. Despite these factors, neither students nor the Qatari Government, the Dean stated, has impinged on Education City's academic freedom, for reasons religious or political.
LeBaron